(b) if so, whether the NDC had approved the Government's intention of investing Rs. 25,000 crore during the Eleventh Plan period for pushing the farm sector on an ambitious 4% growth curve;

(c) if so, the outcome of the discussion held; and

(d) to what extent these States have been progressing well in achieving the agricultural target?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) The Prime Minister had visited Andhra Pradesh (31.7.07), Karnataka (3.8.07), and Maharashtra (31.8.07) for assessment of the agricultural development including efforts made by the States to implement the suggestions of the National Development Council at its meeting in May 2007.

(b) In pursuance of the decisions taken in the NDC meeting, the Government has approved the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) at an outlay of Rs. 25000 crore for the 11th Five Year Plan. This investment is targeted to achieving 4% growth in agriculture during 11th Plan.

(c) and (d) During his visit the Prime Minister stressed upon (i) need for giving due priority to the agriculture sector and (ii) pursuing policies to achieve the higher growth targets ensuring a fair deal to the farmers. Consultations with the States, are being held, on regional basis, for implementation of RKVY.

Fifteen-point programme

29. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister is reviewing the fifteen-point programme;

(b) if so, the details worked out, so far;

(c) the beneficiaries of such fifteen point programme especially in Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) in what manner it would be implemented especially in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) to (d) The Prime Minister's new 15-Point programme is being monitored on half-yearly basis at the Central level by Committee of Secretaries (CoS) and thereafter the report is submitted to the Union Cabinet. The Programme envisages, wherever possible, earmarking of 15 per cent of targets and outlays for the minorities under the schemes included in the programme and conveyed by the Ministries/Departments of the State Governments/UT Administrations including Andhra Pradesh who monitor the progress of the implementation of their schemes.

Amount sanctioned for Sikkim

30. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount sanctioned/allocated and released for Sikkim during the Eleventh Five Year Plan;

(b) the details of amount spent/utilized so far on various works in Sikkim; and

(c) the details of the projects on which the above funds are to be utilized by Government in Sikkim?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) to (c) The Eleventh Five Year Plan of Sikkim is yet to be finalized. An outlay of Rs. 691.14 crore has been approved for the Annual Plan 2007-08 of Sikkim. This outlay is to be funded through State's own resources of Rs. 217.65 crore and Central Assistance of Rs. 473.49 crore including one time Additional Cenral Assistance (ACA) of Rs. 20.48 crore and Special Plan Assistance (SPA) of Rs.45.24 crore. The outlay of Rs. 691.14 crore includes schemes under various sectors such as Agriculture & Allied Activities, Rural Development, Irrigation and Flood Control, Energy, Industry & Minerals, Transport, Communication, Science, Technology & Environment, Tourism, Education, Medical & Public Health, Water Supply and Sanitation Housing, Urban Development, etc.

Conversion of State roads into NHs in Punjab

31. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the length of State roads in the State of Punjab converted to National Highways during the last three years ending 31-03-07, year-wise;

(b) the specific State roads in the State converted to National Highways during the current financial year and proposed to be converted during the next two financial years; and

(c) the expenditure incurred for the conversion of the State roads into National Highways during the last three years ending 31.03.07 and proposed to be incurred during 2007-08 and the next two years for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) and (b) None of the State road was converted to National Highways in Punjab during the last three years as well as during the current financial year. At present, emphasis is being given for development of existing National Highways like widening to two lanes, strengthening, geometric improvements, reconsruction of old/weak bridges etc. Instead of declaring more roads as National Highways. Hence, considering the constraint of resources, there is no proposal for declaration of any new National Highways in Punjab, at present.

(c) Does not arise.

Sethusamudram Shipping Channel Project

32. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government had informed the Supreme Court that it would consider executing the Sethusamudram Shipping Channel Project through an alternative alignment so that the 30-km. long Ramar Sethu/Adam's Bridge could be protected from damage;

(b) whether the Central Government have taken note of the wide-ranging public sentiment, which has been expressed in respect of the decision to proceed with the construction of the Sethusamudram Shipping Channel; and

(c) if so, wehther any final decision in this regard has been taken?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir.